

New York Tribune.

First to Last—the Truth—News—Editorials—Advertisements.

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Stupidity or Worse?

The introduction of the Argersinger bill in the State Senate raises squarely the question which the leaders of the Republican party must answer. The measure is by no means wholly bad. It contains, possibly for decorative purposes, provisions advocated by organizations as little concerned with machine interests as the local Citizens Union.

But there are two amendments which serve to open a discussion which will have unmistakable consequences for the Republican party in New York State. The first of these proposes to destroy the Massachusetts form of ballot by restoring the party column; the second aims at recreating the official party convention as a nominating body, subject to the sanction of a referendum to the people next fall.

Now, the restoration of the party column will not prevent independent voting—it may even have a tendency to stimulate it at the moment, since the New York electorate in recent years has shown itself sufficiently alert in meeting and thwarting the plans of the professional politicians.

In the same fashion a return to the party convention, which means the practical abolition of the direct primary, will not leave the voters helpless, however indignant it may make them. Nor will they be deceived by the plausible suggestion that the proposal be submitted to the voters. This fall is an off year. There is no campaign for President, Governor or Mayor of New York City. There is small incentive to a large registration, and the combined efforts of the Republican and Democratic machines may easily succeed in obtaining the majority vote of the very small minority who will vote.

What is vital, what counts, what will mean an incalculable amount to the Republican party is the fact, not to be blinked at, that such an attempt, whether it succeeds or not, will be justly accepted as a sign that Republican leaders, newly returned to power, have "learned nothing and forgotten nothing"—that the same spirit which wrecked the party a few years ago once more dominates it.

The direct primary battle of this state has been fought out. Before it was over the very large majority of the people of New York were convinced, convinced in no small measure by the tactics of the politicians of both parties, that there was at the least a promise of better conditions under a real direct primary. In opposing the direct primary the Republican organization lost unity and public confidence. Its subsequent defeat, at the least, gained in magnitude because of this fact.

More than all else that long struggle convinced thousands of Republicans, thousands of young men in the Republican party, that the men who controlled it were alike hostile to any new ideas and determined to maintain their control by familiar and discredited machine methods. In their mind the boss had succeeded the leader.

More than the personality of Theodore Roosevelt, more than any specific issue of the Progressive party, this spirit of revolt against stupid and hidebound party rule contributed to sending thousands of the young men, the very life of the party if it were to live, into the great insurrection of 1912, which almost wrecked the Republican party.

To-day by no means all of these young men have come back. The Republican victory in the state last fall was won not on Republican virtues but Democratic offences. It was a negative achievement, which left the electorate wholly cold.

The passage by the present Republican Legislature of a measure such as the Argersinger bill will serve as a new advertisement to young, independent and forward looking men, who are naturally Republicans, that there is still no room for them in the party toward which more and more in recent months they have been turning.

Is it the purpose of Republican leadership in this state to serve as the recruiting agent for the present Progressive party, for some new party of protest a

few years hence? For itself The Tribune hopes not. Temporary Republican prosperity may be contingent upon Democratic blunders and ineptitude. But this can be but temporary.

What is then to be decided in the next two years is whether the Republican party has room in its ranks for a new generation—younger men, with newer enthusiasms, but with much of the old party faith. If the Republican party cannot supply the opportunity—the young men will find it. They mean to go forward. What concerns them now is whether the Republican party of New York State heads in the same direction.

Subway Economy.

Offhand, the Board of Estimate's desire for still another subway tunnel seems extravagant. The realization that it is intended to parallel the Queensboro Bridge a block away makes it seem much more so. Yet there are sound engineering reasons why such a tunnel would save the city money in the end.

The proposed tunnel is designed for the new Broadway subway, which will turn east in Fifty-ninth Street to connect Manhattan with the outskirts of Long Island City. As originally planned it was to cross the river on the Queensboro Bridge. This route seemed the obvious one, and it met with the approval of taxpayers whose money had gone into the wastefully built, cantilever span.

But it was not long before engineers began ridiculing the plan and people began listening to them. What, take a heavy steel train out of a hole in the ground and raise it 150 feet in the air only to let it down again right off? A grotesque waste of power! The idea has taken root, and now the Board of Estimate, no longer fearful of popular indignation over failure to utilize the Queensboro Bridge, would like to save this power to the city. In the course of years such a saving will more than pay for the tunnel.

Pottering Along with the Navy.

The Senate Naval Affairs Committee is trying to undo some of the blunders made in the House of Representatives in dealing with the Naval Appropriation bill. The House majority turned down most of the provisions for the betterment of the service urged by its Committee on Naval Affairs. It stood pat on our present unpreparedness. Any hope of legislation at this session improving the navy's condition therefore hangs on the action of the Senate.

The developments of the war in Europe show that the big seagoing submarine has become indispensable in a modern navy. The House provided for only one vessel of this class. The Senate committee has recommended five and has also increased the authorizations of ordinary coast defence submarines from eight to sixteen.

Next to the submarine in meeting new naval requirements is the aeroplane or hydroplane. These machines have become the scouts of a fleet, far more serviceable than the old scout cruisers ever were. The Senate committee has wisely increased the appropriation for naval aeroplanes from \$300,000 to \$1,000,000.

Those who look a little into the future would like to see the Senate adopt Mr. Smoot's amendment authorizing the construction of fifty seagoing submarines and twenty-five ordinary submarines. Now is the time for us to get a start in this new field of naval defence. But looking into the future is not a specialty with this Congress or this administration. The country will have to take what it can get just now from a regime in Washington which seems to think that the navy and the army are good enough as they stand. There will be another regime soon, which will not take that purblind view of the manifest deficiencies in our national defence.

From Fashoda to Armageddon.

More than half a generation ago two men, each representing the colonial dream of his own country, met on the banks of the Upper Nile. One came from the great victory of Omdurman, which had restored British rule to the Sudan and opened the way for the Cape-to-Cairo railroad. The other had just completed the ever memorable march across Africa from the Congo, through the trackless wilderness of the Bar-el-Ghazal, to Fashoda. For France he was the advance guard of the empire which was to stretch from the Niger to the Red Sea, from Dakar to Jibuti.

For many weeks after Kitchener and Marchand met the world was filled with rumors of one more Anglo-French war. There were days when the conflict seemed ineluctable. But in the end France yielded, the tri-color came down from the little mud fort at Fashoda and Colonel Marchand disappeared into obscurity, another of the great French adventurers, like those who won Canada and India by the sword only to see them lost in the Cabinet.

Yesterday our Paris correspondent noted the return of Marchand to favor and to newer glories as a general in the battle line of the republic. He is now fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men of Kitchener's army, and France has forgiven, England forgotten, Fashoda. The coincidence is worthy of note.

What is most interesting is the realization that less than twenty years ago France and England were at the point of war. The opportunity that came to German statesmanship then was lost. After Fashoda France had to choose between enemies. Unhesitatingly she chose Germany. Bitter as was the sting of Fashoda, the children of the "lost provinces" still beckoned to her. In the long series of incidents which led to the

present conflict the Marchand incident was a landmark. After it England and France, drawn together by a growing realization of a common peril, settled all their colonial quarrels of generations. Then Edward VII seized the fortunate moment to go to Paris; after that Fashoda was forgotten, the *entente cordiale* came and the longest step was taken on the road that led straight from Fashoda to Armageddon.

Facing Homeward.

The Panama-Pacific fair opened with a record attendance and revolves peacefully in its appointed orbit. It provokes no more headlining, except locally. At an equal distance in an opposite direction the European war competes with it for attention, much as a three ring circus come to town competes with the modest movie on Main Street, and with the added advantage of having come to town before the movie. It is only as a restful contrast that the latter can attract an excitement-surfetted public.

This is simply in the nature of a little reminder that the fair is filling this role admirably. It cannot be considered "restful" in the sense of "slow," but as offering a complete change of interest to that large class of Americans suffering from mental eye strain in an attempt to follow the ubiquitous action abroad, whose heads are buzzing from the constant clash of hyphenated sympathizers, whose thoughts, sick with nostalgia, are scattered in strange pastures. To these the California carnival beckons with the voice of home. Once across the Sierras one may cease to be a distracted colonial and become an American again.

The Hoffman House Follows the Amen Corner.

The old Hoffman House has finally surrendered to the northward march of business. Its going will snap another of the few remaining links binding this generation to the preceding one. Famous as a hotel, it was quite as well known as a political headquarters, running a close race with its rival across the street, the Fifth Avenue Hotel, the home of the Amen Corner.

But its political affiliations were more specialized. All creeds and parties foregathered in the Amen Corner, but some time each evening the Democrats would stroll across to the Hoffman House, which was their own particular territory. It was the headquarters of the late Senator Hill, when he was in town. "Pat" McCarren, of the ready wit and saturnine visage, was one of its regulars. "Gene" Wood, manipulator of politics and politicians, inhabited it. Southern Democrats did not run Washington and the nation, used to find the Hoffman House the most congenial spot north of Baltimore.

By the non-political the old hostility will be most likely to be marked in memory for its honest meals and its custom, only recently abandoned, of placing armchairs on the Broadway sidewalk for its guests on summer evenings. It belonged to the period when patrons were "guests," not "customers," and most of those who helped to make it famous have passed on. Like them, it will soon be merely a memory, time-mellowed.

A Much Abused Form.

Every human title is a ceremonial, a form. It is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Its noise drowns many a howling wilderness.

Possibly the title "professor" protects as many guilty secrets as any. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler (himself bedaubed with titles) would have it dropped. He has found that it frequently deceives every one, including, most of all, its owner. Oracle becomes its alias, infallibility its patron saint.

The picture has a reverse side. It displays a rather soiled toga of dignity donned at will by trained bootblack and travelling magician, clothing reactionary theorists and discredited moralists. For every one who regards the garment with awe there is another whom its musty folds repel. And in this number, too, may be found many a wearer of it. Off with it, then! Mister hides nothing except social nakedness. It is simple and sanitary, like a clean shave beside the professorial beard. It is, if we may use still another metaphor, the kind of shave our academic friends need most, and that is saying not a little.

In view of Governor Whitman's recommendation for an \$18,000,000 direct tax, Controller Prendergast may wish he had kept quiet about the money in the New York City Treasury.

The passage by the Assembly of a resolution to adjourn on April 2 entitles it to full credit as the popular branch of the State Legislature.

A five-cent telephone rate will be a blessing, if some people don't use the transmitter twice as often.

Public Service Commissioners visit subway. Headline.

A trifle late to begin to get acquainted.

The dove Mr. Bryan is wearing on his lapel is presumably a "deserving" dove.

Whale blubber on the menu.—Headline.

More conditional contraband.

Aldermen can even make a scandal out of marriage.

What if they had held that Bernheimer party in Great Barrington!

Still, Commissioner Maltbie might have paid rent for that car.

Politician shoots alderman.—Headline.

Why the distinction?

An Open Forum THE PEOPLE'S COLUMN For Public Debate.

THE HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS

Restrictions Enhance Real Estate Values, 'Tis Contended.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In connection with the proposed legislation now pending to withdraw from the city the power of establishing zones of building restrictions, I observe that some of the reasons advanced for the proposed limitation of the height of buildings which are based on the idea that such restriction will have the effect of reducing the value of real estate. It is on the contrary, I believe, that reasonable restrictions, such as those proposed, will have a most beneficial effect in enhancing the valuable asset of light and air.

Nor is it strictly true that the restriction proposed limits height. Its effect is to restrict height at the building line, and those who are foolish enough to want to build excessively tall buildings, or to construct monumental towers, can still do so if they wish to burden their property with such unremunerative encumbrances.

A positive assertion is credited to the owner of the property on which the Stewart Building stands to the general effect that a limitation to a height of twelve stories would reduce the value of his property to a very large extent.

As the proposed ordinance stands a building of 300 feet in height would be permissible on this site, as it faces a park area, but although this would admit of building a structure twenty-four stories high, it would not follow that it would be necessary to construct so extensive and expensive a structure to produce the income required to maintain a value of \$4,000,000 on the site.

In point of financial fact, the most economic investment upon that site would be the twelve story building which the owner seems to regard as a source of ruin. The cost of such a building would be moderate, its expenses of operation less than a higher one, and at the prevailing moderate rent a return could be secured that would pay 8 per cent on the building cost and 4 1/2 per cent on \$4,000,000 value of the land.

The real trouble with this valuable property, as with many others, has been the excessive area of rentable space thrown upon the market by the Woolworth and Municipal buildings, with accompanying cautious restriction of loans for other buildings by lending agencies until the excess area shall have been absorbed. The principal lesson which the owners and operators of real estate have to learn from the tall building development of the past twenty years is that the higher the building the higher is the cost of construction per cubic foot, and the higher also the cost of operation per square foot of occupied area, the higher the taxes per square foot of site and the lower the relative space available for rentals.

The economic principle in the improvement of real estate is to invest in building the least possible capital commensurate with a reasonable return upon a moderate land value.

The restriction of height of buildings will aid in reducing the risks of real estate and in building up the city on sounder bases than in the past.

REGINALD FELHAM BOLTON.

New York, Feb. 24, 1915.

Machinery and Socialism.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Mr. Edison recently predicted that the time would come when physical labor would no longer be necessary, as most of the work of the world would be performed by machinery. It is common knowledge that millions of workers are now dependent for their livelihood upon the wages they receive from the owners of the large industries. The question arises, "When the time predicted by Mr. Edison arrives what will become of this vast army of workers?"

Will they be forced to seek a new planet upon which to find a living, or, failing that, to starve? "Barbarous, unthinkable!" we cry. What, then, is to be done? Is it not self-evident that the only way to solve the problem is to have the means which are used in the production of wealth which are social and public in nature publicly owned and operated, with the good of all as the end rather than that of a comparative few?

E. W. VAN VALKENBURGH.

East Orange, N. J., Feb. 23, 1915.

The Woes of Waterfront Property Owners.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: There is a factor that is oppressing reality owners and undermining the basis of the city's credit, namely, the attitude of the city administration to the owners of waterfront property.

Formerly in the old cities of New York

and Brooklyn waterfront owners were encouraged to improve their holdings by building piers, bulkheads and filling in and reclaiming land. As a result, many millions of dollars were added to the taxable values of both the cities.

Under recent administrations riparian owners have been hampered and interfered with by the Dock Department and Law Department, and improvement of the waterfront is at a standstill. In one instance a false statement made by an official in one of the city departments as to the ownership of lands partly under water prevented the reclamation of land worth \$500,000.

Claims to title to lands below high water mark in Jamaica, Flushing and Gravesend have been made by the City of New York after the lands have been filled in and reclaimed, and large amounts of money spent in improvement, and also after grants for the land under water have been obtained from the State of New York.

Much litigation has resulted, and the courts have refused to sustain the city's claim to ownership as to the lands in Flushing and Jamaica bays. In one case the Appellate Division of the Second Department decided the attitude of the city, if the parties to the transactions were both individuals and neither was a municipal corporation, would scarcely be deemed ethical.

More flagrant, inefficient municipal mismanagement cannot be cited. It is, alas, only one of the many recent onslaughts of the authorities on taxpayers which are adding to their bad times to the burdens of property owners.

E. S. PRAY.

579 Fourth Street, Brooklyn, Feb. 25, 1915.

Assails New York Rents.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Mayor Asks Help for Hungry Workers" suggests the question why workers should be hungry and shirkers have all the wealth of the community. According to the figures of the Society for Lower Rents, less than 5,000 people in this city last year, after paying all taxes, assessments and other expenses, collected from the industry and enterprise of business men, the blood and sweat of working men and women, over \$310,000,000 in exorbitant rents and for inflated prices for land. This represents the amount they were taxed and fined for the right to live, to work and be of benefit to the community, and also accounts for the unemployment, poverty and degradation that are now chronic all over the country.

What the beneficiaries of our land system do to entitle them to live at the expense of the rest of the people is past finding out. Like the Hittites of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, and a more useless bunch of pirates and parasites it would be impossible to find anywhere. Let the Mayor pay more attention to the causes that make workers unemployed and hungry—I, e. low taxes on land, high taxes on buildings, and help remedy these conditions. The workers will take care of themselves.

ALEXANDER LAW,

Secretary Tenant's Union.

New York, Feb. 22, 1915.

A Word to Josephus.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Now that you have heard from the naval expert, Walt McDougall, whose suggestion is to eject India ink in the water surrounding vessels about to be attacked by submarines, permit me to make two suggestions more practical and efficacious.

1. If the submarine is seen approaching, send down a diver and throw pepper in its eyes.

2. If departing, put a little salt on its tail.

Either of these methods will render the submarine helpless. It can then be easily captured and trained to do parlor tricks.

Bayonne, N. J., Feb. 20, 1915.

Desecration.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I felt highly indignant, in attending the mass meeting of the For America League at the Hippodrome last night, to learn that the beautiful title, "The Prince of Peace," is sometimes applied to the Secretary of State at Washington, William Jennings Bryan.

There is only one "Prince of Peace," our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to apply this title to any one else is simply desecration.

I protest, and ask every man and woman in the United States to protest also against such misuse of this title of the highest nobility, "The Prince of Peace."

MARIE L. RANKE.

New York, Feb. 23, 1915.

VIEWS OF A YEOMAN

Why Englishmen Back Belgium Against Germany and Dislike the Kaiser.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The German version of the war and its causes has been freely circulated in America, and one wonders if the American people understand the attitude and sentiments of "the man in the street" on this side. I write this in case you should think it worth while to publish the opinion of an Englishman of the yeoman class, typical (I venture to believe) of the many thousands who are leaving home, business, etc., for the old country's sake.

The Germans are trying to make out that it was prepared for the war and that it was premeditated on our part; but it must be clear to every impartial observer that if our government had intended to fight Germany their only sane course would have been to introduce compulsory military service before doing so. Since the war began over a million civilians have offered themselves; and people do not willingly give up home, family and business for the mere sake of fighting or for the love of conquest.

When Germany trod under foot her guarantee of Belgium neutrality she threw off the mask, and in doing so made our course clear. I am speaking for these million-odd civilians who are now soldiers. No doubt we are a sinful nation, and deserve the punishment this war has brought upon us; but we are sons of the men who made British history, and as such we simply could not spoil the whole story by staying at home and saying this was none of our business. In the face of our guarantee we could not say with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

But supposing there had been no guarantee on our part, we could not have stood aside; and I believe I am still speaking for the million. If a man sees that a tiger has broken loose in his neighbor's garden should he wait for the brute to break through his own fence before he shoots? Germany gave herself away when she attacked Belgium, whose only offence was that she happened to be in the way—as we are ourselves sometimes.

The Kaiser has studied the Old Testament, but the New Testament has apparently not yet reached him, for the book was written on purpose to teach men their duty to God and their neighbor, and this is what he does not understand. Even so, there is something grotesque about his feeble imitation of Moses, whose chief characteristic was meekness. (Numbers, xli, 3.)

With all his vaunted culture (and he has had a fair education), the Kaiser appears to have overlooked the essential fact that any true leader of God's chosen people must be "meek and lowly in heart."

With all its dreadful cost in human life, this war may yet prove to have been England's salvation. But for it we might now be engaged in the worst kind of war—a civil war which would rend the empire in pieces.

Personally (I cannot be quite sure of my million on this point), I would consider it as much a duty to fight for Ireland's honor as it is now for England's, seeing that we are responsible for the proper government of Ireland. We owe Belgium a debt, but our debt to Ireland is far heavier. If Ireland is sold to the Papists it will be to our everlasting shame, and it would be a kindness if you Americans would remember this the next time John Redmond comes round with his hat in hand.

Corporal, A Squadron, West Kent Yeomanry, Cavalry Barracks, Hounslow, Middlesex, Feb. 8, 1915.

Peace Rather than Suffrage.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Referring to your article about Miss Drexel in the edition of February 21, may I call attention to the fact that she says "the women of Europe don't feel that the present war could have been averted, but that they do feel it is a different sentiment may be planted and made to grow for the future." Though she felt that nursing the soldier is futile and destructive work, and working for votes for women in New York is constructive work worthy of her abilities, I must concede that she has rightly gauged the feelings of the European women. And may I not advise her through your columns that if she really desires constructive work for the good of her country she will cease her futile efforts for votes and devote her energies to the education of the young toward that peaceful sentiment she would see planted and fostered?

The education of the next generation is in the hands of the women.

FLORENCE SHUMWAY.

472 East Eighteenth Street, Brooklyn, Feb. 23, 1915.

MOST EXTRAORDINARY WATSON!

[From "Western Wanderings," by Conan Doyle, in the February Cornhill.]

The catching seemed to me extraordinarily good, especially the judging of the long catches by the black-ear, as the outfields, who are far from any shade, are called.—B. L. T., in The Chicago Tribune.

The Conning Tower

THE GRAND TOUR

Osage City, Kansas.

TO A TRAIN BOY

I've purchased your pears and your apples;
I've purchased your postal card scenes;
Your candy and such I've invested in much,
And I've bought all your March magazines.
But please, an you value your carcass—
Unless you are fair for a fight—
Unless you would die, do not ask me to buy
The novels of Harold Bell Wright.

I've purchased your "Eagle" and "Beacon,"
Your "Journal," your "Post," and your
"Star";

I gladly gave up for a foldable cup,
And I fell for a jitney cigar.
But pray, put a check to ambition,
Don't ask me again, or I'll bite;
O boy, you'll compel me to shoot if you sell me
The novels of Harold Bell Wright.

F. P. A.

Pasted Jewels

TO THE "LOUDER" FRIEND.

At every banquet where I've been,
When finished is the cake and chowder,
The list of speeches they begin;
Then some one always bellows: "Louder!"

Some one far distant in the gloom
Of smoke so thick that you could cart it
In barrows from the banquet room
Is absolutely sure to start it.

You think you've got your audience where
In just a minute they will cheer you,
When some one stands upon a chair
And yells: "Old man, we cannot hear you!"

You back right up and start again,
Put on more steam and try to crowd 'er,
When some one wrecks your mental train
By yelling: "Just a little louder!"

By now you're getting short of breath,
Your thoughts are growing thin and brittle,
Your face assumes the hue of death;
The fiend says: "Raise your voice a little!"

The chunk of wisdom that you had
To give to them is dust and powder,
Your knees are going to the bad;
Once more you hear it: "Louder, louder!"

I'll bet when that grim fiend departs
And journeys to the regions prouder,
That when the angel choir starts
He'll interrupt with cries of "Louder!"
—Edgar A. Guest in The Detroit Free Press.

AN UNUSUAL COLLABORATION.

[From the Swedish-American League News.]
On Saturday evening Mrs. Trygg and Mrs. Bergstrom in a group took the prize as Martha Washington, at Nordstjernan's mask ball in the Coliseum.
B. L. T., in The Chicago Tribune.

Well, we may as well do the obvious thing, and ask for poems containing rhymes to the word "jitney." Heaven is our witness that we are innocent. Los Angeles, Kansas City, et al., have gone through this thing, and some fool correspondent has tried, with disastrous results, to put it all into rhyme. This article is merely to show you what to keep away from.

Kansas City came to bat with a limerick something like this (we quote from a memory that is more often at fault than otherwise):

"There was a young fellow named Whitney,
Who ran out in front of a Jitney;
The thing knocked him down,
He arose with a frown,

Saying, 'Now I'm laid up with a split kneel!'
Henrietta rushes to the fore with these lines:
"The day was fine, my smile benign, when I boarded
The Jitney Bus.

My lid was high; the roof—O my!—came down and
Mixed with us!

I HAD to sit (thank heaven for it!) and I did it
without a fuss;

The speed was high, no cop came nigh to sputter
and fume and cuss.

I sniffed the air, and Spring was there, when I rode
in the Jitney bus—

I paid my fare and I made the Square. Hoory for
the Jitnebus!